



County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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WILLIAM T FUJIOKA
Chief Executive Officer

July 6, 2010

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To: Supervisor Gloria Molina, Chair
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From: William T Fujioka
Chief Executive Officer

CREATING A FOURTH CHILD WELFARE OUTCOME GOAL: SELF-SUFFICIENCY

On March 2, 2010, your Board passed a motion directing the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), in conjunction with the Departments of Children and Family Services (DCFS), Community and Senior Services (DCSS), Mental Health (DMH), Probation, Public Social Services (DPSS), the Community Development Commission (CDC), and other affected departments, to report back in 30 days and quarterly thereafter on establishing the fourth child welfare outcome goal of "self-sufficiency," and the feasibility of:

- 1) Realigning existing departmental revenues and expenditures to support new strategies to improve self-sufficiency for youth to include, but not be limited to, housing, education, employment and well-being;
- 2) Centralizing concurrent youth development planning services;
- 3) Integrating "youth-centered" self-sufficiency services across various County departments in order to create seamless service delivery; and establishing youth self-sufficiency MAPP goals for the responsible departmental managers within those various County departments; and
- 4) Creating an evaluation mechanism to establish baseline data and, thereafter, annually measure improvements in the child welfare outcome goal of self-sufficiency.

The 30-day status update was delivered to your Board on April 2, 2010; this is the first quarterly report.

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective And Caring Service"

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Youth Development Services Redesign

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2009-10, the Youth Development Services (YDS) Division, co-led by DCFS and Probation, underwent a redesign process to determine how it can improve its service delivery to eligible youth and better utilize shrinking resources. Since YDS is responsible for managing a significant amount of the resources allocated for youth exiting the County's care, the CEO partnered with DCFS, Probation, the Commission for Children and Families, the Juvenile Court, several children's advocates, non-profit providers and former foster youth to ensure that this redesign effort incorporated key components essential for promoting self-sufficiency among our youth. Over 75 key stakeholders from these entities, as well as DCFS contractors, community college staff, and foster parents, came together to brainstorm ideas for redesigning YDS and ensuring that youth are successfully prepared for their transition to adulthood. A 25 member workgroup was assembled to finalize a vision and set of overarching goals for the division to operate by (Attachment I). A redesign implementation plan was also created that integrates these goals programmatically into the work of the division (Attachment II). The eight Phase I recommendations have already begun implementation, with another eight Phase II recommendations scheduled for completion in January 2011.

Realigning Departmental Revenues and Expenditures

Two of the recommendations in the YDS implementation plan address the realignment of DCFS revenues and expenditures: 1) Exploring the feasibility of transferring the administration of housing programs out of DCFS (Recommendation No. 9), and 2) Exploring the feasibility of centralizing contracting, auditing and finance functions into the larger respective Department sections (Recommendation No. 11). A cost analysis of administering these housing programs and an analysis of the current YDS staffing structure are both currently underway to determine if the Department could reallocate additional dollars and program staff to cover other youth-related needs, if these recommendations were implemented.

A survey of 19 County departments, from all five County Clusters, and seven external partner agencies has been distributed to identify those programs helping transition age youth improve their overall well-being and achieve self-sufficiency. Included in this survey is a list of the programs/services offered, their eligibility requirements, both the categorization of these services already provided and those which could potentially be provided, the funding sources, budget information, and any funding requirements like matching dollars needed or the existence of capped allocations. These survey results will serve as the basis for an assessment of how revenues and expenditures should be realigned to more effectively meet the needs of our youth.

Centralizing Concurrent Youth Development Planning Services

DCFS is developing a policy for expanding their comprehensive case planning process to include the five overarching goals mentioned above (Recommendation No. 3). As a result, these planning meetings will incorporate the areas of permanency, education, employment, social and emotional well-being, and self-sufficiency into the overall case planning process for these youth. Not only will this produce more integrated case plans, it will promote concurrent planning by including additional external experts working with these youth in this process, thereby improving overall coordination of both planning and service delivery. The Department is also considering increasing the number of YDS staff outstationed in their regional offices (Recommendation No. 10) in order to improve social worker access to youth experts who can provide additional staff support, information about specialized resources, and participate in the case planning process.

In partnership with the Commission for Children and Families, Public Counsel, and the CEO, YDS is rewriting the Statement of Work for their existing Life Skills contracts to pilot test new ways of delivering life skills services, beginning in FY 2011-12. This will include ideas like potentially using "Transition Skills Counselors" to help complete Transitional Independent Living Plans; work to address the educational, employment, and permanency needs of youth; and support the caregiver and youth in identifying real world experiences that can be used to teach life skills in both the home and community. These new service delivery concepts will be designed to complement the work of the social worker and provide additional support for meeting the needs of these youth.

Integrating Youth-Centered Self-Sufficiency Services Across County Departments

YDS is working to build the capacity of all nine of its Transition Resource Centers to become full service, one-stop, drop-in centers where transition age youth can access a variety of services from multiple County departments (Recommendation No. 12). Existing rental agreements are being reviewed to determine if the current space allocation for these sites is adequate, or if new locations need to be acquired.

A 15 member workgroup has been established to further pursue integrating self-sufficiency services across various County departments. The workgroup includes representatives from the CEO, DCFS, DCSS, DMH, Probation, DPSS, CDC, Commission for Children and Families, children's advocates, non-profit providers, and a former foster youth. The workgroup is currently pinpointing programs and initiatives across County departments that could be connected to one another, creating a more seamless delivery of services. It has also begun identifying potentially key policies that could be adopted by your Board to improve coordination among the various departments in working with these youth. These will be presented to you as a set of recommendations in the near future.

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Creating an Evaluation Mechanism

YDS is updating its database so that it will track all contacts and services provided to each youth (Recommendation No. 15), and to ensure it fully complies with the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) requirements going into effect in October 2010. NYTD is a Federal mandate in which states must provide additional outcome data on the transition age youth it serves, or incur substantial penalties to the Chafee funds it receives. The outcome areas included in this additional data are: 1) Employment and other sources of income; 2) Educational attainment; 3) Permanent relationships with adults; 4) Housing; 5) High-risk behavior; and 6) Access to health care. These data will go a long way in helping to assess whether or not the County is making progress in preparing our youth for self-sufficiency and adult success.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me, or your staff may contact Kathy House, Acting Deputy Chief Executive Officer, at (213) 974-4530, or via e-mail at khhouse@ceo.lacounty.gov.

WTF:KH:LB
CDM:hn

Attachments (2)

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
 County Counsel
 Children and Family Services
 Commission for Children and Families
 Community Development Commission
 Community and Senior Services
 Mental Health
 Probation Department
 Public Social Services

Youth Development Services Vision and Overarching Goals

Vision

To prepare system youth, ages 14–21, for adult success. Just as a parent would do for their own child, transition planning must ensure that youth become self-sufficient, thriving adults who are capable of contributing positively to their communities and maintaining healthy relationships.

Goals

Permanency

Permanency for older youth requires a different approach and takes on a greater degree of urgency, particularly for youth who have languished in the system.

Desired Outcomes:

- Full family membership
- Significant connection to another person (relative/non-relative adult, sibling, friend, and school site personnel, etc.)

Education

Education is the ticket to self-sufficiency, especially for youth who do not have a safety net to fall back on.

Desired Outcomes:

- Actively engaged in school and participating in enrichment activities
- Stable in a school setting that best meets their needs
- Performing at grade level or their highest potential
- Knowledgeable about and prepared for post-secondary opportunities

Workforce Development

Workforce development is the key to attaining stability because these youth are 100 percent reliant on themselves financially when they leave the system.

Desired Outcomes:

- Preparation for success in the workplace
- Exposure to career opportunities and career planning
- Gained work and/or internship experience prior to exiting care
- Financial literacy

Social and Emotional Readiness

Social and emotional readiness is the foundation on which all other success is built. This is particularly important for maltreated youth, whose history puts them at a distinct disadvantage for developing healthy personal and professional relationships.

Desired Outcomes:

- Capable and receptive to participating in healthy relationships
- Youth and their families are able to process their grief, loss, and trauma
- Expanded social networking opportunities (teen clubs, peer advocates, youth advocacy, and leadership development, etc.)

Self-Sufficiency

Self-sufficiency is the benchmark for which true success is measured.

- Permanent place to live
- Full family membership or, at a minimum, significant connection to another person
- Earning a living wage or attending postsecondary educational institution
- Socially and emotionally healthy
- All relevant documentation in their possession
- Ability to effectively advocate for themselves
- Successfully prepared to transition out of the system as a result of receiving appropriate, coordinated services from the four goal areas listed above

Youth Development Services Redesign Implementation Plan

PHASE 1 (June 30, 2010)

1. Expedite check request processing
 - Work with Chief Executive Office (CEO) and Auditor-Controller (underway)
 - Set a policy for ensuring this process becomes institutionalized (six months)
2. Create Youth Councils at each Transition Resource Center (TRC) and/or other geographically desirable locations
 - Work with California Youth Connection (CYC) and Foster Care Alumni Association (FCAA) on establishing (underway)
 - Pilot at least one Youth Council (six months)
3. Create a policy for expanding the comprehensive case planning process to include the five overarching goals within the planning process
 - Start with Permanency Planning Conferences, Transition Conferences and other non-emergency meetings
 - Nina Powell-McCall to create language (June 30, 2010)
4. Enforce the accountability for Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP) completion through Supervising Children's Social Workers and include TILPs as part of the Quality Services Review
 - Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to determine (discuss with Joi)
 - Create a template for the TILP Standard for which the quality of TILPs should be measured against; including youth in the completion of TILPs, must be part of this Standard
 - Review the current TILP training and modify as necessary (three months)
5. Ensure the ability to meet the immediate financial needs of youth
 - Completed for Fiscal Year (FY) 2009-10
 - Begin planning for FY 2010-11 to address the projected budget shortfall
 - Convene a meeting with CEO budget analysts and key partners to develop a contingency plan if the State budget is not signed or gets cut (June 30, 2010)
6. Ensure that the Youth Development Services (YDS) budget is proactive
 - Needs to be informed by Youth Councils and program evaluation data (after Youth Councils are formed)
 - Schedule regular Independent Living Program (ILP) budget meetings to:
 - Discuss both immediate budgetary concerns and future planning on an ongoing basis
 - Review the line item budget and make recommendations about discretionary funding
 - Discuss upcoming contracts before they are renewed or extended
 - Review outcome data on existing contracts
 - Review the Budget Status Report on a quarterly basis
 - Prioritize budget according to age and types of services as appropriate

- Schedule meetings before any milestone dates of when proposed recommendations need to be completed by
7. Ensure that at least 20 percent of YDS funds are unencumbered and can be used as discretionary funding (review annually)
 - Rhelda Shabazz to provide information regarding budgetary legal restrictions (June 30, 2010)
 - Kathy House to research amending contract language to allow delegated authority (underway)
 8. Evaluate Transitional Housing Placement Program to determine the necessity for future funding
 - To be conducted by the CEO/DCFS (June 30, 2010)

PHASE 2 (January 2011)

9. Explore the feasibility of transferring the administration of housing programs out of DCFS (three months)
 - CEO to conduct cost-analysis (underway)
 - Complete provider interest survey (Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority) (June 30, 2010)
 - Need to ensure that there is not a reduction in current bed capacity nor a disruption in service provided to youth
 - Need to ensure that service levels remain equal to or better than they are currently
 - Explore opportunities to create scattered site housing through notice of funds availability processes
 - Identify contracting deadlines (June 30, 2010)
10. Increase outstationed YDS staff into department regional offices and the existing nine TRCs
 - Robby Odom to provide staffing list (June 30, 2010)
 - Robby Odom to compile data on number of youth served per TRC (June 30, 2010)
 - Robby Odom to compile data on breakdown of youth by age per regional office (June 30, 2010)
 - Robby Odom and Michael Verner to compile list of current YDS staff mandates (June 30, 2010)
11. Explore the feasibility of centralizing contracting, auditing and finance functions into the larger respective department sections
 - To occur in conjunction with YDS staffing decisions
12. Build the capacity of all nine existing TRCs to become full service, one-stop shops with the ability to access services from multiple County agencies
 - CEO Real Estate Division to review the existing agreements (three months)
 - Discuss resource allocation with other County Departments (set for 5/28/10)

13. Utilize Youth Councils to deliver peer-based life skills workgroups at the TRCs
 - Need to allocate funds for refreshments, staffing, miscellaneous costs
 - Work with private partners to identify funds
 - Work with CYC and FCAA to develop the structure
14. Explore the feasibility of utilizing alternative life skills models and multiple tracks for service delivery (including home settings and natural environments)
 - Use of transition advocates
 - Providing a higher teen-rate pay for caregivers
 - Working with caregivers to teach life skills at home
 - Explore models allowing for more youth to be served and with greater consistency
 - Rhelda Shabazz to provide ideas of providing life skills using a model similar to family preservation
 - Create a workgroup co-chaired by the Children's Commission and Public Counsel to develop a plan for delivering services for next FY (August 2010)
 - Plan will incorporate input from stakeholders
15. Ensure YDS has a comprehensive database that tracks contacts and services provided to each youth
 - Analyze existing fields and any missing data (three months)
 - Align with National Youth In Transition Database and other data mandates (October 2010)
 - Explore linkages to other existing systems
16. Train workers and caregivers on the unique needs of teenagers
 - Incorporate into existing Foster and Kinship Education Programs for caregivers
 - Incorporate into existing departmental staff trainings

